

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Akron, Ohio
Tuesday, April 23, 2019
Minutes of the Session Meeting – FINAL
Be adaptive, engaging, generous, inclusive and relevant. Be faithful. Be Westminster!

The regular meeting of the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church was called to order by Moderator and Pastor Jon Hauerwas at 7:00 p.m.

Elders (+ present, * excused, - absent)

Class of 2019	Class of 2020	Class of 2021
+ Marcia Holcomb	+ Michael Dunbar	+ Phil Fry
* James Gray	* Brad Hall	+ Nancy Keogh
+ Ed Labbe	* Shelley Koutnik, Treasurer	+ Becky Pool
+ Alec Works, Clerk of Session	+ Todd Willis	+ Don Rearick

Also present: Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator; Greg Grafinger, Assistant Clerk of Session; guests Rev. Cathy Ulrich, General Presbyter and Stated Clerk; and Ginny Melver (Moderator, Properties Committee, served on most recent Pastoral Nominating Committee).

Opening, Declaration of Quorum and Extension of Floor

Pastor Jon opened the meeting with prayer at 7:00 pm. The presence of a quorum was confirmed and declared. A motion was made, seconded and approved to extend the privilege of the floor to the guests.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Agenda

A **motion prevailed** to adopt and approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda. The floor was then turned over to Rev. Ulrich.

Discussion

Rev. Cathy Ulrich

In response to some earlier discussions, Pastor Jon invited Rev. Ulrich and others current church leaders to discuss some challenges that Westminster Presbyterian Church and Eastminster Presbytery have faced. Some concerns arose over the process for the dissolution of a pastoral relationship in the mid 1990's. More recently, there were some significant concerns and frustrations faced by the Pastoral Nominating Committee. These appeared related to changes in personnel at the Presbytery level assigned to oversee the process, which resulted in different expectations and lengthening of the process. It was acknowledged that there may have been some concerns at the Presbytery level based upon the experiences at Westminster in the 1990s. Rev. Ulrich offered to share observations. There was agreement that church leaders need to be educated early in the search process, with a continuing need for transparency and effective communication. Rev. Ulrich then led the group in prayer before she and Ginny departed at 7:40 p.m.

Clerk's Report

The Consent Agenda as approved included the following motions:

2019-067 MOTION prevailed to approve the minutes of the regular Session meeting of March 26, 2019.

2019-068 MOTION prevailed to receive the following report of all weddings, funerals, baptisms, and Communion that have taken place since Session's March 26, 2019 meeting:

1. Weddings: none
2. Funerals: none [The funeral home handled the family memorial service for James Barnett.] [Note: A memorial service for Claude Wilton, (died April 18), husband of member Anna Marie Wilton, is scheduled for April 27. Services are pending for Iris Kuehls, who died on April 15.]
3. Baptisms: none
4. Communion: April 18, 2019 (Maundy Thursday, 7:00 p.m.), attendance 52; April 21, 2019 (Easter Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m.); attendance 43 and 286. [Clerk's note: 2018 attendance was 21 and 289; 2017 was 53 and 335.]

2019-069 MOTION prevailed to receive the report of the average worship attendance for March: 132 (10:30 a.m. service); attendance for the March 6 Ash Wednesday service: 33.

2019-070 MOTION prevailed to approve the membership statistical report for the month of March 2019:

Total Membership as of 3/1/19	404
Additions: none	0
Deletions: none	0
Deaths: James D. Gray (died 3/18/19)	1
Total Membership as of 3/31/19	403

2019-071 MOTION prevailed to remove James Barnett, deceased, member #4805, and Iris Kuehls, deceased, member #4393, from our membership role.

From Memorial Garden Committee:

2019-072 MOTION prevailed to approve a display of funeral and memorial related information in the Memorial Garden after worship on June 30 hosted by the Memorial Garden Committee.

From Discipleship:

2019-073 MOTION prevailed to approve a Youth trip to Cedar Point on June 6. The youth will pay half of their admission cost.

2019-074 MOTION prevailed to approve an Adult Fellowship activity for June 30, the Cleveland Orchestra performance at Blossom Music Center (Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone). This activity will be promoted in the Sunday Updates the two preceding Sundays.

2019-075 MOTION prevailed to approve an Ice Cream Social following the Third Sunday Dinner on August 18. Sarah Matheny (freelance naturalist) and Sam Sapp will present their music/nature program "Songs and 'Tails' of the Woods"; the cost to the church is \$75.

From Outreach:

2019-076 MOTION prevailed to approve participation by Westminster in the 2019 Akron Pride Festival, to be held on August 24, 2019 from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. at Hardesty Park.

2019-077 MOTION prevailed to approve collection of school supplies in July, with distribution tentatively planned to Portage Path Community Learning Center and Good Neighbors, based upon needs.

The Clerk's Report moved to after Consent Agenda:

Alec circulated a letter from Good Neighbors thanking us for our continued support. Any elders with questions on the Session Gmail account should contact Alec. Marcia Holcomb offered to attend the next presbytery meeting, scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 4 at the Barberton Presbyterian Church. The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2019-078 MOTION prevailed to elect Marcia Holcomb as Westminster's Commissioner to the June 4, 2019 meeting of Eastminster Presbytery.

Committee Reports and Actions

Personnel Committee (No minutes nor motions) Nancy Keogh for John Childs
Nancy reported that staff performance reviews are progressing well.

Discipleship Committee (April minutes were attached; see consent agenda for motions) Ed Labbe
Moderator Ed Labbe reported on several activities in planning stages. He explained that Discipleship would like to survey the congregation using Survey Monkey and bulletin inserts regarding use of the church library. The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2019-079 MOTION prevailed to have Discipleship proceed with surveying the congregation regarding use of the church library.

Finance Committee (March financial reports were attached; see motion below) Todd Willis
As of March 31, 2019, year-to-date income is about \$12,000 over budget, again noting than some have prepaid their pledges for the year. Expenses are about \$25,600 under budget; approved wage and salary increases will begin hitting expenses. The following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2019-080 MOTION prevailed to accept the quarterly financial report as presented.

Properties Committee (No minutes nor motions) Phil Fry for Ginny Melver
Phil reported that the April 13 "Spring cleaning" was a huge success. Many areas were cleaned out, making them more available for use.

Membership Committee (No minutes nor motions) Michael Dunbar for James Gray
Michael reported that they are focusing on the history project, as well as ways to attract new members. A suggestion was made to periodically update the church's Facebook page.

Nominating Committee (No minutes; see motions below) Phil Fry
Moderator Phil Fry reported that the committee is scheduled to meet on April 28.

Outreach Committee (April minutes were attached; see consent agenda for motions) Becky Pool
Moderator Becky Pool reported that they plan to continue investigating a grant from Presbytery to collect and distribute sanitary items for women in need.

Safety and Security Task Force (April minutes were attached; no motions) Don Rearick
Don reported on several recommendations from the committee. Evacuation procedures will be added to the attendance pads in the pews. Opportunities for training for ushers and possibly others were also discussed. Pastor Jon added that he followed up with church staff on general safety.

Pastor's Report and Remarks

Pastor Hauerwas

Pastor Hauerwas reported that Ohio Living's Adult Day Care will be closing; his understanding is that it will be effective the end of May. This was their last location in Ohio. As a follow up to past Visioning discussions, this adds another space in the church available for new use(s). Three potential task forces had also been discussed: additional / improved parking, improved sound (acoustics) and kitchen improvements. Per discussions, various feasibility studies have been done in the past. Regarding parking / handicapped access, input from persons with or familiar with such needs and someone familiar with Americans With Disabilities Act requirements would be helpful. There are some concerns with bass sounds in the sanctuary; there is more of a problem with resonance in Wright-Herberich Hall. Checking the wiring might identify the problem in the narthex. Much work has already been done in the kitchen. Any extensive renovations would need to be justified based on anticipated needs. Consequently, the kitchen is not considered a higher priority project at this time. Committees are encouraged to consider these proposals; Session will revisit this topic in May.

After discussion of potential dates, a decision was made to schedule the next Visioning discussion for 9 – 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 11.

Pastor Jon next reported that he has been asked to officiate at a funeral service for Justin T. Rogers, Jr. on May 25. Neither he nor his wife Jane are members; she reported that they attended worship services at Westminster off and on for 23 years, until the more recent years. Pastor Jon said he is available and willing to officiate. The following motion was made, seconded and approved: **2019-081 MOTION prevailed** to approve a memorial service at Westminster Presbyterian Church on May 25, 2019 for Justin Rogers, with Pastor Jon officiating.

[Clerk's note: Pastor Jon reported the next day that the family does not plan to have a reception at the church.]

Worship Committee (No minutes; see motions below)

Nancy Keogh

Co-moderator Nancy Keogh had several items to present. The first relates to the organ refurbishment. [Clerk's note: the project was approved on July 30, 2018.] During the Visioning discussion on March 31, 2019, Alcee Chriss III, Music Director / Organist, presented 3 proposals, with Schantz Organ providing the lowest bid. He expressed a desire to also contract for voicing to be performed by an outside party in conjunction with the refurbishment. The Worship Committee was to follow up on the proposals.

Since she was unable to attend the Session meeting, Shelley Koutnik expressed to the Clerk her concern that all of the work, including travel time, meals and lodging, could be done for the budgeted \$17,000, especially if the company from Indiana was selected. Alcee later expressed his preference to proceed with Patrick Fisher (from Indiana) for the voicing work, anticipating the work to meet the budget. The comments from Alcee were shared with Session. Phil Fry said that the casters on the organ were in bad shape. One is broken, meaning that corner needs to be lifted to move the organ. Replacement is included in the proposal; he suggested that work be done as soon as possible.

The following motion, shown as amended, was made, seconded and approved:

2019-082 MOTION prevailed to award the Schantz Organ Company a contract in the amount of \$15,000 for the Organ Tonal Regulation Project and Patrick Fisher a contract in an amount up to \$2,000 for organ voicing for a total project cost not to exceed \$17,000. Work on the casters should be done promptly.

The next item pertains to quarterly Jazz Vesper worship services, which were also discussed during the March 31 Visioning session. The motions from Worship proposed holding these services at 4 p.m. on Sunday evenings in conjunction with Third Sunday dinners. The pilot would last for one year and include four services, offered quarterly. Specific dates are to be determined. Participation in the

service would be part of the pastor's regular job description, and he would not receive additional compensation for his participation. For his services as a jazz pianist and music director for the service, Westminster's Music Director/Organist (or a suitable replacement) would be paid \$250 per service. A number of other musicians are also needed for the service. They, along with the Music Director/Organist, would be paid from the New Church Life Fund. The Worship Committee is asking that \$3,000 be set aside for the paying of all other musicians for these 4 worship services. It is the preference of the Worship Committee that these worship services be held in conjunction with our Third Sunday Dinner, which would still be held at the usual time of 5 p.m. The church would place a banner on the front lawn publicizing the service and would publicize the service to the greater community through print and electronic media. No food shall leave with church members, and all leftover food shall be given to Haven of Rest on the day of the event.

During discussions, clarification was sought as to whether other payments, such as fees for the Music Director and potentially publicity / advertising, crossing guard and child care, would also come out of the New Church Life fund. Although holding these services in conjunction with the Third Sunday dinners may well increase attendance, there was some concern as to how Outreach would handle any increases in dinner attendance, as well as logistical considerations (e.g., volunteers preparing the dinner during the service). The consensus was to defer any decision on timing until these concerns may be addressed. The following actions were then taken on the motions from Worship: **2019-083 MOTION defeated** to approve offering quarterly Jazz Vespers worship services at 4 p.m. on Sunday evenings. The current plan is to hold these in conjunction with Third Sunday dinners. **2019-084 MOTION defeated** to approve payment of \$250 per service to the Music Director / Organist (or a suitable replacement) for his (her) participation in the service. Participation would be part of the pastor's regular job description. **2019-085 MOTION defeated** to approve setting aside \$3,000 from the New Church Life Fund to cover the costs of additional musicians for these services (2019-2020 church year).

The following motion, shown as amended, was then made, seconded and approved:

2019-086 MOTION prevailed to approve the use of New Church Life funds for four Jazz Vespers Services including payment of \$250 per service to the Music Director / Organist (or a suitable replacement) for his (her) participation in the service, up to \$3,000 to cover the costs of additional musicians for these services and up to \$1,000 for all other expenses, for a total expenditure not to exceed \$5,000 for the 2019-2020 church year. Participation would be part of the pastor's regular job description. Dates and times for the services will be determined at a later date.

The following motion was tabled during the March 26 meeting: **2019-063 MOTION was tabled** to approve the sale of CD's for artists featured as part of the 5@5 concert series in the hallway outside the pulpit side of the chancel. Either the artist is responsible for selling the CD's, or, if the artist is in town by themselves, our Music Director / Organist or another Westminster PC representative can assist them in this endeavor. A standard contract for all concerts, including a waiver of financial liability for our Music Director and any other Westminster PC representatives regarding CD sales can be drafted by John Childs.

Worship has approved a contract fitting the terms described above. Motion 2019-063 was replaced with the following motion from the floor:

2019-087 MOTION prevailed to approve the sale of CD's and / or merchandise after the performance by artists featured as part of the 5@5 concert as specified in the standard contract. Contract specifications include that if a lay person or staff member of Westminster Presbyterian is asked to assist in CD sales, the church will assume no liability for lost and/or miscounted merchandise or funds. The sale of CDs is not allowed in the sanctuary or narthex. A table may be set up in the hallway to the immediate right of the handbell choir tables. CD sales will cease at 6:40 PM at the latest.

Board of Deacons (April minutes were attached; see motion below)

Pastor Hauerwas

During the March 26 meeting of Session, the following motion was tabled: **2019-065 MOTION was tabled** to ask Outreach to investigate having Westminster become an active participant in the Earth Care initiative.

General Presbytery may have more details on the Earth Care initiative later this year. The Deacons suggest that a task force or subcommittee be set up to explore ways Westminster can become involved in similar projects or activities. Per the request of the Deacons, the following motion was made, seconded and approved:

2019-088 MOTION prevailed to approve having Outreach, or another committee of the church, explore supporting a “Green(er) WPC” through a subcommittee or task force. Members of the Board of Deacons may be asked to serve on such a group.

New / Other Business

There was no other new business.

The next regular Session meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. [Note: That is the day after Memorial Day.]

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved. The meeting was then closed with all joining in the Lord’s Prayer at 9:42 p.m.

Alec Works, Clerk of Session

Pastor Jon Hauerwas, Moderator